

Volume 3 Interlude

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Interlude

The royal capital of the Kingdom of Re-Estize.

In the deepest part of the royal capital, over twenty huge and circular towers had been constructed at equal distances from each other and connected by walls, forming the royal castletown Laurentin. Valencia Palace was located within these grounds.

Inside the palace, there was a room which held a more functional importance than its gorgeous decoration. Many nobles and ministers-of-state were gathered here to attend a palace meeting.

Amongst them was the figure of the Kingdom's Warrior Captain, Gazef Strolonoff. He knelt before the king Ranpossa III., who sat on his throne, to swear his allegiance.

He seems to have grown even older.

Although only half a month had passed, that was Gazef's impression after comparing the King's current appearance after his return with the one from before his departure.

His own beloved monarch. That head was already scattered with pale white hair, the emaciated body was beyond being described as healthy even as a compliment, and his facial complexion was also very poor. The hand holding the scepter was as thin as a twig, and the crown on his head seemed quite heavy.

After his reign of thirty-nine years, he was now sixty years old. Originally it was already time to abdicate the throne to a successor, but the problem lay in the fact that there was no suitable successor to choose from.

It was not that there were no princes who could be the successor. Although there were two princes, they were not qualified by far. If his abdication were to happen now, they would definitely become a puppet of the greater nobles.

The old man announced in a weak voice:

“Warrior Captain, it is truly splendid you were able to return safely.”

“Yes! Thank you very much, your Majesty!”

Hearing these words of concern, Gazef bowed deeply as he replied.

“Ah, of course we have already received the report, but we would still request the Warrior Captain to personally give a detailed explanation of the incident, and what exactly happened.”
(TL-Note: Gazef’s proper rank amended to “Warrior Captain”.)

“As your Majesty commands.”

Gazef explained in depth the events that took place in Carne Village after he had left the capital to the King. He went into particular detail about the mysterious magic caster of the name of Ainz Ooal Gown, but didn’t mention the suspected espionage by the Silian Theocracy. This was because in Gazef’s judgment, only a few individuals needed to know about this, and the circumstances were not appropriate to reveal it here.

Therefore Gazef talked extensively about the heroic deeds of the man he encountered and how that man risked his life to save the villagers from danger.

“This really is a beautiful story. Selflessly placing himself in danger to rescue the weak...”

The King’s sentence was filled with praise, causing several nobles to utter contemptuous remarks about this Ainz Ooal Gown.

A problematic and suspicious individual.

An eccentric person who did not dare reveal his true face to the public.

A magic caster with an odd name.

Eventually there even arose an opinion that he had orchestrated this attack in order to promote himself.

Gazef had to restrain himself from showing anger. He felt ashamed for being unable to utter a single word in defence of his benefactor who was criticised like this.

Of course, there was a good reason for this. Because the nobles who were cynical towards his benefactor had one thing in common: they all belonged to the large group known as the Greater Nobility Faction.

The Kingdom of Re·Estize was a feudal state with the king controlling thirty percent of the territory, the greater nobles holding another thirty percent and the remaining forty percent being controlled by the other, lesser nobles.. Right now, the kingdom was internally divided into two camps, competing day and night against each other in a power struggle.

One side supported the monarchy, while the other side, which supported the Greater Nobility faction, included more than half of the six greater nobles. Although they were in the presence of the King, this place had also become an extension of their fighting, a battleground for the two competing factions.

Because of this, being of the pro-monarchy faction and also a confidant of the King, Gazef was unwilling to casually interject. He knew that his clumsy manner of speech had no chance of arguing successfully against these nobles, therefore it was necessary to avoid slipping up and giving others the chance to use his own words against him.

...The Silian Theocracy's covert operatives were able to grasp our movements and appear at a timely moment... this indicates a spy has probably infiltrated the inner workings of the Kingdom. If this is the case, perhaps it is someone among the six greater nobles...

Gazef's eyesight drifted towards one particular person amongst the ranks of nobility, a noble with a particularly cold gaze.

This person had his blonde hair tied to the back and a pair of slender blue eyes.

His skin had the unhealthy white coloration that suggested it was rarely exposed to sunlight. His lanky figure gave the impression of a viper.

Although his age should not have reached forty, his appearance looked exceptionally older because of that unhealthy skin tone.

He was one of the six great nobles, called Lord Raven. He constantly switched between the two factions like a bat in order to further his own profits. He was also a noble who covertly approached the King's second prince.

If there is a traitor to the Kingdom, it should be this fellow right?

Noticing Gazef's gaze, Lord Raven curled his lips which were already very thin. Seeing that kind of provocative attitude, Gazef's expression became even more rigid.

"With that, the Warrior Captain's report ends here. There are other important matters which need to be decided upon."

The king declared, feeling a little exhausted, telling the nobles to back off for the time being. Gazef walked to the King's side and surveyed the nobles. As a personally trusted subject of the King, he was long accustomed to unpleasant stares.

“Well then, in accordance with usual yearly custom, we shall war with the Empire in a few months time. This is the next item on today’s agenda. Lord Raven, explain to everybody.”

“Yes, your Majesty.”

Like a ghost, the man silently walked up and began to explain in a soft voice.

Nobody made a noise. Not only did he have influence over both factions, he was also the one with the most power amongst the six nobles. Nobody dared making an enemy out of him.

No objections were made as Lord Raven went through the planned course of action and who would send out how many soldiers. After he finished explaining, he smiled frivolously at the King and bowed:

“——The report has been concluded.”

“Thank you, Lord Raven. Does anyone have anything they wish to say?”

Once again the room became noisy, with whispers being exchanged.

“This time it is our turn to repel the opponent. With that, let us then proceed to directly counter-attack the Empire.”

“Absolutely correct. I’ve pretty much become tired of only merely repelling the Empire.”

“That’s true. Let those imperial fools experience our worst.”

“Correct, Earl-sama, just as you say.”

The room resounded with the merry laughter of the men wearing fine clothing.

Stop dreaming. If it were possible to refute in such a way, who knew how much fun it would be.

The Kingdom and the forces of the neighbouring Empire would meet every year on the battleground at Kaze plains.

Until this date, neither side had suffered too serious injuries, but that was because the Empire never committed its full forces. If there was any real intent to topple the Kingdom, there would be no need at all to set camp at Kaze plains and wait for the Kingdom’s army to arrive.

Gazef and a few other nobles who still used their brains reckoned that the Empire used such a method in order to deplete the Kingdom of its national strength.

The Kingdom, composed of militia; And the Empire, composed of professional soldiers, and having a hierarchy of Knights.

Which side's soldiers were superior was obvious with a single glance, hence the Kingdom needed to mobilise twice the numbers of the Empire's forces from their population and because of the larger amount of troops, the army needed a greater amount of food supplies. Although there were magic items which could produce food, they were only intended to provide nourishment and the resulting food was so unpalatable that even starving people would hesitate to eat them, therefore those could never become the main source of provisions for meals.

Moreover, the Empire's invasion was just in time for the wheat harvest, leading to a shortage of manpower in villages, who had to delay the wheat harvest as a result.

Without having to commit all their forces in an assault, the Kingdom's national strength would naturally weaken, following which the royal power would also wane.

That was the reason the Greater Nobility faction turned a blind eye to this. They were happy that the authority and power of the enemy faction —— the royals —— were decreasing.

Once our national strength became feeble, the Empire would invade with full strength! Do you really think the enemy is satisfied with the current skirmishes? Why is your way of thinking so naive?

Gazef was aggravated by those nobles who believed that their own absolute power would perpetually exist.

“So what you are saying is that the suspicious magic caster, who rescued the Warrior Captain, could possibly be someone from the Empire with the objective of infiltrating our side for espionage?”

“Ah, so that was it, you're right. I heard the Empire has a Magic Caster Academy, so this is very likely.”

“The names of the people in the Silian Theocracy consist of a given name, a baptized name and a family name, is it possible that this name is a pseudonym?”

“Men of that sort who appear in the Kingdom are always those who make others uncomfortable, do you think we should come up with a way to handle him?”

“Perhaps you can also consider capturing him. The adventurer's guild does whatever they please by employing a large number of magic casters. It's a problem that another such being exists. It will be better for us to find a way to place him under our authority.”

“The money paid to the Guild cannot be taken lightly either. Adventurers living in the Kingdom charge very unreasonable fees for repelling monsters currently residing in the country!”

“Bringing him here should be the best option.”

Hearing this, Gazef could not stay silent any longer. He absolutely could not allow them to continue slandering the benefactor who save himself, the villagers and his subordinates.

“One moment please. First of all, that magic caster is extremely friendly to the Kingdom. The way of thinking, of wanting to arrest this kind of benevolent person is really unwise——”

Gazef gave his opinion in an attempt to divert the palace meeting’s increasingly biased discussion direction. Several nobles showed obvious looks of disgust.

With only his sword talent, Gazef climbed into his current position. In the eyes of the nobles whom had long histories of heritage, he was nothing more than an overnight wealthy upstart.

This was why Gazef was detested by them. Furthermore his swordsmanship was unparalleled within the Kingdom, which only deepened the nobles’ hostility.

The hardest part for these distinguished nobles to accept were men with abilities that surpassed their own, even though their status was lower than their own.

Several nobles did not wait for Gazef to finish speaking before verbally denying Ainz Ooal Gown one after another, and others followed suit in echoing their denial.

The king seated on the throne said hoarsely, with a hint of admiration:

“... Enough. We conclude that the Warrior Captain’s judgment is not wrong.”
(TL Note: This is the Royal “We” used here)

“Well... if your Majesty says so...”

The nobles did not refute, temporarily holding back their ridiculing smiles.

Gazef sent a look of gratitude towards the monarch to whom he had sworn allegiance and who had in turn elevated Gazef’s status.

Meeting Gazef’s gaze, the King nodded gently in indication.



After every power struggle and flattery meeting, his heart and mind would become exhausted. However, Gazef did not let this show on his face as he accompanied the King along the palace corridor.

The King, who walked with a cane, had injured his knee in a past war and his gait would sometimes be unsteady, but considering the King’s dignity, Gazef did not extend his arm in assistance. Moreover, if he had already reached the condition which required the assistance of

others in order to walk, the great nobles faction's voices in support of abdication would become stronger, requesting the King to abdicate in favour of a puppet prince manipulated by them.

Although Gazef felt saddened, the King still had to walk with his own strength.

Arriving near the royal quarters after walking slowly along the corridor, the King suddenly spoke:

“... The nobles' strength is still needed to curb the Empire's invasion. If their advice is bluntly rejected, this country would split itself apart without having to wait for the Empire to invade.”

Although the content was abrupt, Gazef was very clear on what the King was trying to say, therefore he could only bit down on his lips.

“I envy the Empire.”

Gazef did not know the words that would console the King's whispers.

Three generations ago, the Empire had also been a feudal state. However, the power of the nobles gradually weakened, and when the current emperor ascended the throne, it became an absolute monarchy.

The current emperor—— Zirkunif Lun Farod el Nix.

During his ascension to the throne, the killings were so bloody that it was almost enough to form a river of blood, therefore this youth was henceforth known as the Blood Emperor. Gazef recalled coming across him in the battlefield, the emperor who once wanted to recruit him.

That emperor truly was a born ruler.

“Because of my superficial way of thinking, I was unable to protect you, and for that I am sincerely sorry. Even when issuing you a dangerous order, I was unable to give you the best equipment for the job... we are asking for your forgive-, no, please forgive me... Your subordinates also lost their lives because of this.”

“No, not at all...”

“Gazef, it may not make a difference, but although it cannot be called an apology, I would like to give recompense to the families of the deceased. In addition, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude towards Master Gown for rescuing my most loyal and trusted aide.”

Even though it wasn't the King himself who was rescued, he still wanted to personally express his gratitude towards a mere lowly commoner. This matter should be problematic, but ——

“I believe a virtuous man like him will be satisfied with just those words.”

“Is that so... oh?”

Two figures walking along the corridor became reflected in the King's eyes, especially eye-catching was the beautiful girl who walked in front. That girl's beauty was rumoured to be beyond what could be captured on a portrait; a truly indescribable beauty.

The King let out a smile. His love for the young princess exceeded that towards his other children.

Renner Theiere Chardelon Ryle Vaiself.

The 3rd princess inherited her dazzling mother's appearance, and was renowned by others as the “Golden Princess”.

Being sixteen years old, she had already reached an age where marriage was nothing out of the ordinary. This was also another reason for the nobles' penchant to create trouble.

The title was derived from her golden hair, silky smooth and supple as it draped over the back of her neck. Those healthy-looking smiling lips were a light cherry blossom pink in colour. Dark blue eyes like sapphires shone with warmth and vibrance.

The fashionable white dress further strengthened the image of purity she gave off to others. Around her neck hung a golden necklace, looking as if it was the emblem of her noble soul.

Standing behind her was a youth who was in the process of growing from a boy into a man. He was wearing a white armour and could be described with the term ‘raging fire’.

Above his curved sanpaku eyes were two rough eyebrows.

His face bore an expression of a will as strong as steel, with a tanned dark color. For convenience of movement and the avoidance of battle as well as other reasons, his blond hair was cut in a neat and tidy fashion.

This youth called Climb was someone whom Gazef did not know how to get along with. It wasn't that he disliked him, rather he liked him.

However, Gazef simply found difficulty in dealing with the heavy atmosphere that he gave off. Gazef did not hate serious individuals, but he still hoped that the other side could relax a bit.

Still, Gazef thoroughly understood Climb's feelings.

Climb who was always by the side of the most beautiful woman in the kingdom, would often suffer the jealousy and resentment of others, and should not even have any friends. Also, his origin was also like Gazef's—— no, even worse than Gazef's. Therefore he could not display any weakness, for none of his actions could afford to allow his mistress to suffer any criticism.

“Father, Warrior Captain.”

The King smiled towards Lana who ran over with light steps, and nodded towards the deeply bowing Climb.

“It seems your meeting is finally over.”

“Yes. There were many topics to discuss.”

“So it was like that. I’ve thought about it for a second, and wanted to allow father to listen to my idea, therefore waited here for you.”

“Is that so? Then I am really sorry.”

Her ideas were no trivial matter.

The other reason why she was hailed as the “Golden Princess” was because she had a nimble mind and admirable spirit. Not only did she establish landmark institutions, but also proposed new bills.

Her proposals were almost all relief measure plans for the civilians at the bottom of society. Moreover, it was not by way of charity, but by preparing a good welfare policy, giving the civilians who were willing to help themselves the opportunity to become self-sufficient.

Not only that, but also at the same time improving the status of being a civilian, boosting their loyalty towards the royal family, strengthening productivity, all which affected the policies which the royal family had interests in.

Although there were obstructions from the nobles who did not wish for the strengthening of civilian status, and almost all of the established institutions were dissolved, the broad range of acquainted people and the people who received her grace all gave a high evaluation of her efforts.

“Then I shall listen to you attentively when we return to your room.”

“However, father, it is now time for your daughter’s walk. Climb and I shall wander about the nearby surroundings then return.”

Hearing the Princess indicate that her walk was more important than a discussion with the King, Climb’s expression became even stiffer. Gazef felt some pity for him.

However, Princess Renner has always had her own way of doing things. As an attendant, he could not complain.

“Is that so? Then go, and come find me in my room to discuss this when you return.”

“I understand. Let’s be off, Climb.”

“Pardon me.”

As a warrior, Gazef spoke to the deeply bowing Climb:

“Climb, you also need to diligently improve your swordsmanship, to be able to protect Princess Renner under any circumstances.”

“Yes!”

Climb nodded vigorously. Conversely, Renner let out a discontented voice.

“Climb is fine. He will definitely be able to protect me at any moment.”

Those words were unfounded. However hearing the Princess say it seemed to give it an element of truth.

“Then we shall be off, Climb.”

Renner’s slender fingers tugged the corner of Climb’s clothes. Although it was just an unconscious gesture/act, Climb’s expression became even more rigid after noticing it, becoming as hard as a diamond.

“Yes, Princess.”

Even though Climb’s face was expressionless while he was being pulled away by the princess, sadness and resignation could be seen in his eyes.

Although the two people forgot to pay their respects, the King did not appear to mind and was only silently looking at the two as if looking at something he had long lost in the past.

“...As King, feeling pity cannot be a good thing.”

Climb was of unknown origin. He was a poor child picked up by Renner when she had ventured outside the castle.

Only skin and bones, he was a small child almost about to die from starvation, continuously striving to protect his saviour. No, merely striving was not a sufficient description.

He had no talent in either the sword or magic nor was he blessed with any particular outstanding athletic ability.

However, he did diligently train bit by bit. Of course, his talent was not at Gazef’s level, nor did it reach the level of heroes. Even so, his strength forged by hard work and practice still reached

the highest level of all of the Kingdom's soldiers. However, there are still some things which cannot be surpassed.

Those would be status, power, and also being a man of value.

Princess Renner's value as a person was extremely high, and Climb simply could not match up.

"My lord's heart is very considerate."

"Although I know it is foolish, I still wish for at least one of my daughters...to be able to attain freedom. No... my other daughters will definitely scold me... I've really become old, thinking about these kinds of things."

The King gazed at an empty space, as if there was someone there:

"Perhaps, I must also allow this daughter to fall into misfortune."

If the Princess were to be married at this moment, the groom would definitely be someone from the Great Nobility Faction.

Gazef, who shared similar thoughts, did not speak. It was because he did not know what to say. The only people who were able to understand the king's troubles were those in a similar position, and Gazef was not one of those people.

A surge of silence filled the space between the two men. To shake off this silence, they strode forward once again .